



[Henry Nxumalo, 1917-1957](#)

Defiance Campaign

The document attached, and linked below, the third in this part of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) series, was written by the famous “Drum” reporter, Henry Nxumalo [pictured above].

In 1950, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was banned, dissolved itself, and gradually began to reconstitute itself as a clandestine party, the SACP. The Communist Party made no further public statements until 1959, when the first issue of the African Communist magazine was published.

But two other things happened: the remaining, legal components of the movement rallied round to protest against the banning and to support the formerly-CPSA comrades, such as Dadoo, Marks, Bopape and Kotane, as reported by Henry Nxumalo a few months later in the Drum magazine.



Volunteer-in-Chief

The movement was solid. The ANC did not wash off the communists. The NDR was already on firm foundations. The Defiance Against Unjust Laws campaign, which was first and foremost a campaign against the banning of the communist party, was led by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, among others. Mandela was that campaign's Volunteer-in-Chief.

The lead up to this episode is described in Govan Mbeki's 1992 book "[The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa](#)". At the beginning of Chapter 7 of that book, Mbeki recalls the joint ANC/CPSA protest against the Suppression of Communism Act on May Day 1950, and the massacre of 18 people on that day by the National Party regime that had come to power in 1948. This is something South Africans should always remember on the May Day holiday each year.

Consequent to this massacre, 26 June 1950 was observed with a stay-away as "Freedom Day".

Two years later, the same day, 26 June, was used for the launch of the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign in 1952, and it was used again in 1955 when the [Freedom Charter](#) was

adopted on that date at the Congress of the People in Kliptown.

Note that 26 June, our original Freedom Day, having to do with the protests against the banning of the Communist Party, is not a Public Holiday in South Africa. 24 September was made a public “Heritage Day” holiday at the insistence of the Inkatha Freedom Party (see [here](#)).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign, Drum, 1952, Nxumalo](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).